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THE PROGRESS OF FEDERATION AMONG THE CHURCHES

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While Christian unity as a sentiment is everywhere in the air, it is taking perhaps three concrete forms.

The first is that which is expressed by the hierarchy at Rome. It is not our purpose here to discuss this form.

The second is that which finds expression in such movements as the Christian Unity Foundation and the proposed Conference on Faith and Order. For that we pause to offer a sympathetic prayer and to express our hope. Co-operation in service must precede it, or at least go hand in hand with it. Fellowship and unity of action must not wait too long upon it. We must come together for it with enough mutual faith and trust to believe that our aim and work are common.

There is therefore another form of Christian unity which is possible without waiting for any conference on faith and order, and which is absolutely necessary before we can reach the common ground for any such conference. It might be called Christian unity at work. It is a unity not to be created so much as discovered and interpreted. We already have it. All we need to do is to exercise it.

God has put into our human order the mingling together of unity and diversity. While it is a unity, on the one hand, which is not uniformity, it must also be diversity, on the other hand, which is not divisiveness. I believe that the movement of which the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is the most concrete expression is an illustration of this principle of progress.

Federal unity is stronger and more vital than the first form of unity, represented by the Vatican, because it is unity with freedom, and because unity is stronger without uniformity than with it.

The social difference between the unity of the Federal Council and the unity of Rome is also this: With federal unity the church may give herself for the sake of the world regardless of what becomes of herself; she may give herself for the sake of humanity and not for the sake of herself, while under the unity of Rome she is obliged first of all to take care of her own life. We must be willing to save our life by losing it.

Federal unity, however, recognizes the two principles of progress—differentiation and coherence. It recognizes that the Kingdom of God does not mean solitariness, on the one hand, or uniform consolidation, on the other. It is simply genuine co-operation without regard to the ultimate result to ourselves. It is not trying to get men to think alike or to think together. It is willing that the army should be composed of various regiments with differing uniforms, with differing banners, and even, if necessary, with different bands of music at appropriate intervals, provided they move together, face the same way, uphold each other, and fight the common foe of the sin of the world with a common love for the Master of their souls, for each other, and for mankind. It is unity without uniformity; diversity without divisiveness; comprehensiveness, not competition or compulsion.

I have discovered, I think, this interesting fact: that it is possible, almost always, to get the churches into Christian unity provided you can prevent them from discussing Christian unity. I am no longer asking men to come together from the various churches to hold a conference on the question of Christian unity. I am willing to talk with them upon almost any other subject than that. The important thing is to get them together to show them the common social task—a task which absolutely cannot be done unless they do it together—and leave them to draw their own inference as to their duty and as to the will of God and the Spirit of Christ.

I have discovered another interesting fact. If you want to have a conference which will be absolutely harmonious, without bitterness or invidious utterance, get men to come together from just as many denominations as you can, as in the Quadrennial Council, where they met together to face a common task. It is only when men and women of one denomination assemble in conference

that there is any serious divisive utterance. And the differentiation and distance between the two remotest constituent bodies of the Federal Council are less than the variance between the two wings of any one of them.

This unity we already have. It simply awaits its discovery and use.

Federal unity is denominationalism in co-operation. It is the effort to adjust autonomy and corporate action, individuality and social solidarity, liberty and social adaptation. According to the classic definition of Herbert Spencer, evolution is the process of passing from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation. Thus the rise and existence of denominations, following the Protestant Reformation, was an indication of progress and not of deterioration.

A study of history, however, reveals another element in evolution, namely, that it is cyclical. Progress is not definitely in one direction, it comes through both forward and backward movements. We go a long distance in one direction, we then pause, and to a certain point make a return. We then gather up our renewed forces and move on again.

In theology we know of thesis and antithesis. First we move in the line of one proposition; then comes a proposition the antithesis of this, and out of the ultimate blending of the two we find harmony and progress.

These various theories of evolution seem applicable to our denominationalism. We have gone pretty far in carrying out the proposition which has resulted in the diversity of denominationalism. Those who hold to Rome have gone equally far, in their antithesis, in the direction of unity. Perhaps we are getting, among our Protestant denominations, to recognize in equal proportion the two principles of evolution and progress which we find everywhere in the natural order—diversity and unity.

Our various denominations and sects arose largely from the demand for freedom, and through much suffering we found our freedom. We are now recognizing as denominations, however, that the highest freedom we possess may be the freedom to give

up some of our freedom for the sake of the common good. This was the kind of freedom to which Paul referred in his discussion of those denominational differences which had already begun in the apostolic church. We are ready to acknowledge, without forgetting perhaps, that in our intellectual expression of truth we have been of Apollos or Cephas, that we are all of Christ, and that in allegiance to him we must maintain or regain unity even in the midst of our diversity. We are following still farther our denominational search for freedom and are seeking this highest freedom in our modern movements toward Christian unity.

For the past century or two we have been largely building up denominationalism, and now we have discovered the severe truth of the word of Jesus: "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake and the gospel's shall find it." That is the one text and suggests the one sermon for these thirty constituent denominations of the Federal Council and for all other Christian bodies.

Meanwhile one of the most startling of modern discoveries is that we have been so sadly and so thoughtlessly wasteful. We have wasted our mineral wealth, squandered our forests, and allowed the mighty forces of our streams to run out into an un-needing sea.

Worse still, in the development of industry, and by social neglect, we have wretchedly wasted our human power and, as our new legislation witnesses, we have been criminally prodigal with human life itself. We have poisoned, neglected, maimed, and mangled by our inefficient speeding up, by our twelve-hour days and seven-day weeks. While we have wasted the forests that make the mines, we have also wasted by thousands our human brothers in the mines, have slaughtered and despoiled our women, and have consumed our babes beyond the count of Herod in our suffocated cities, while we had half a continent of fresh air. In our commercial development we have sacrificed innocent human life upon the altar of, and have given over our little children to, an industrial Moloch saying, with outstretched iron arms, "Let little children come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Mammon." And, if we followers of Christ are content to disavow

the blame, let us remember that in the same breath in which the Master said that to neglect these little ones was to forget himself, he also condemned men, in his most severe and solemn utterance, for the things they did not do.

But these are not an intimation of the worst of our dissipations, and indeed these wastes have been largely because of a deeper and more serious prodigality. We have let the very light within us become darkness, and the saddest of all has been the waste of our moral powers, our finer emotions, and our religious enthusiasms through sectarian divisions, denominational rivalries, and unrestrained caprice often deluding itself as a religious loyalty. If our effort for redemption had been given more fully to prevention, we should not now stand trembling, shamefaced, and bewildered before the results of our own social havoc. Our most serious profligacy has been the neglect to cultivate our ultimate power, the power of our religious enthusiasm, and our spiritual impulse, because these were neither socially concentrated nor socially interpreted and applied.

The first approach toward federation was the organization of Christian men and women in various voluntary organizations, upon particular interests which were obviously common to all the churches. Thus there have arisen, during the past half-century, a large number of interdenominational movements, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the United Society of Christian Endeavor and various other young people's movements, the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip and other similar bodies, the Laymen's Missionary Movement, the Student Volunteer Movement, the International Sunday-School Association, and other co-operative organizations.

Another type of such movement is represented by the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, and similar societies whose chief distinctive common characteristic is that they are comprised within the realm of what are known as the evangelical churches.

Of a still different type are the various temperance and other reform organizations, as well as a multitude of societies for social and philanthropic work which, while having a less intimate connection

with the churches, are almost entirely made up of officials and members of the churches, many of which either tacitly or explicitly regard these organizations as expressing the will of the church.

These movements and organizations, while each concerned with its own special interest, have, at points, found their work to be in common, and have, in their turn, entered into voluntary co-operation.

Later this general movement assumed a more official character through the home mission boards, resulting ultimately in the Home Missions Council in 1908, the Missionary Education Movement for the common publication of missionary literature, and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America representing the foreign mission interests of the churches. The women's boards of missions have organized the Council of Women for Home Missions and the Federation of Women's Boards of Foreign Missions. The Sunday-School Council of Evangelical Denominations also belongs in this category.

The organizations which have been named do not complete the entire list, but are mentioned simply as indicating these forms of co-operative denominationalism. They are mainly voluntary movements, and those made up of official organizations are officially representative of those boards and not of the denominations themselves.

Meanwhile other Christian leaders, among whom should be mentioned William Earl Dodge and Dr. Philip Schaff, whose vision and interest comprehended the whole realm of Christian enterprise, organized the Evangelical Alliance, which, while it was not an official organization, did, as a matter of fact, within a limited sphere, speak and act for the American churches.

The federative movement, speaking in the stricter sense of the word, began in the local communities, the first federation of churches having been the New York (City) Federation of Churches in 1895, followed by the Massachusetts Federation of Churches in 1902.

At this point mention should be made of the simultaneous movement toward co-operation and federation in the foreign field. Attention should be called to the fact that federation in the home field is largely in the nature of a reflex action from foreign

missions. From time to time since 1872, when the first conference was held in Yokohama and the translation of the Bible was arranged for, various gatherings of missionaries have been held in Japan, looking toward increasing co-operation, the most notable of these being the Osaka Conference in 1881 and the Tokyo Conference in 1900. The transition was so gradual and normal that it would be difficult to determine the date of what might be called the first federation of the churches in the foreign field.

The following historical statements are made on the basis of previous reports in which conflicting dates are given:

The year in which the first local federation of churches was formed, 1895, at the annual meeting of the Open and Institutional Church League, one of the many interdenominational movements of that time, the secretary of that organization, Rev. E. B. Sanford, in an address calling upon the churches for larger social service, gave prophetic utterance to the call for Christian unity as a sovereign interest in the work of the League.

At about this time several measures were proposed and some organizations approached, all looking toward the same end. We may take as an example of these the proposal of the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip, in 1891, which resulted in the formulation of a constitution which provided for a "Federal Council" whose members were to be appointed officially by the highest judicatories of their representatives on the executive councils of denominational brotherhoods, the first federal convention of this organization being held in the Marble Collegiate Church in New York in 1893. The founder of the brotherhood, Rev. Rufus W. Miller, later became a member of the Executive Committee appointed at Carnegie Hall. Other similar examples might be mentioned.

The first meeting looking directly toward federation was held in New York in 1899. The presiding officer was William E. Dodge, of the Evangelical Alliance, and its administrative work was performed by Dr. Sanford, who ultimately became the corresponding secretary and is now the honorary secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. It authorized action that brought about, in Philadelphia in the next year, the National Federation of Churches, whose membership was composed of

representatives of local churches and federations. The Executive Committee of the meeting in 1899 sent forth an utterance propounding the question: "May we not also look forward to a National Federation of all our Protestant Christian denominations, through their official heads, which shall utter a declaration of Christian unity and accomplish in good part the fulfilment of the prayer of our Lord, 'that they all may be one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.'"

At the annual meeting of the National Federation in Washington, in 1902, a committee of correspondence was authorized to request the highest ecclesiastical or advisory bodies of the evangelical denominations to appoint representative delegates to a conference to be held in 1905. This conference, at Carnegie Hall, New York, adopted the constitution of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which, after ratification by the constituent bodies in its fellowship, brought about the final and complete organization of the Federal Council at Philadelphia in 1908.

The 1905 conference elected Rev. William H. Roberts as permanent chairman, and the new federation was really more or less in existence during the period from 1905 to the final organization in 1908, through a permanent executive committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Roberts. Annual reports were published in 1906 and 1907, regarding, not only the progress of organization, but also the development of the federative movement in local communities and in the foreign field.

Finally, "the meeting of the first Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was opened in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia at 7:45, on Wednesday evening, December 2, the Rev. William Henry Roberts, permanent chairman of the Interchurch Conference of 1905 and the chairman of the Executive Committee having charge of the Philadelphia meeting, being the presiding officer."

The distinctiveness of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America lay in the fact that it was not, like the other movements, a voluntary interdenominational fellowship, but an officially and ecclesiastically organized body. This was the ideal

clearly in view when the Interchurch Conference was called to convene at Carnegie Hall, New York, in November, 1905. The following is the preamble and the substance of the Plan of Federation adopted by that Conference:

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

PLAN OF FEDERATION RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERCHURCH CONFERENCE OF 1905, ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES OF CONSTITUENT BODIES, 1906-1908, RATIFIED BY THE COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER 2-8, 1908

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, In the providence of God, the time has come when it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches of America in Jesus Christ as their Divine Lord and Saviour, and to promote the spirit of fellowship, service, and co-operation among them, the delegates to the Interchurch Conference on Federation, assembled in New York City, do hereby recommend the following Plan of Federation to the Christian bodies represented in this Conference for their approval:

PLAN OF FEDERATION

For the prosecution of work that can be better done in union than in separation a Council is hereby established whose name shall be the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

The object of this Federal Council shall be:

- I. To express the fellowship and catholic unity of the Christian church.
- II. To bring the Christian bodies of America into united service for Christ and the world.
- III. To encourage devotional fellowship and mutual counsel concerning the spiritual life and religious activities of the churches.
- IV. To secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life.
- V. To assist in the organization of local branches of the Federal Council to promote its aims in their communities.

This Federal Council shall have no authority over the constituent bodies adhering to it; but its province shall be limited to the expression of its counsel and the recommending of a course of action in matters of common interest to the churches, local councils, and individual Christians.

It has no authority to draw up a common creed or form of government or of worship, or in any way to limit the full autonomy of the Christian bodies adhering to it.

The following restatement of principles underlying and guiding the work of the Federal Council was adopted by the Executive Committee at its annual meeting in Baltimore, December, 1913:

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

ITS DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER IN RELATION TO THE DENOMINATIONS

The difference between the Federal Council and organizations of similar general purpose which preceded it, is that it is not an individual or voluntary agency or simply an interdenominational fellowship, but it is a body officially constituted by the churches.

Its differentiation from other movements looking towards unity is that it brings together the various denominations for union in service rather than in polity or doctrinal statement.

The original delegates to the Interchurch Conference on Federation, which organized the Federal Council, felt that these limitations were necessary in order that such an organization might have adequate strength and momentum.

Its representative character.—The Federal Council is, therefore, the sum of all its parts. It is not an unrelated organization. Its function has been to express the will of its constituent bodies and not legislate for them. Were this, however, to be construed as precluding the utterance of the voice of the churches upon matters in regard to which the consciousness and the conscience of Christianity are practically unanimous, the Federal Council would be shorn of the power given it by the constituent bodies when they adopted as one of its objects: "To secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life."

Denominational autonomy.—In the original Plan of Federation the autonomy of the constituent bodies is, however, wisely safeguarded. No action by the Federal Council, even though taken, as all its important actions have been taken, by the unanimous vote of the officially constituted delegates of the constituent bodies, can, by the terms of its constitution, be legally imposed upon those constituent bodies. Such action, by the terms of the constitution, goes back to the constituent bodies in the form of a recommendation for their action or ratification, which may either be assumed or definitely expressed.

It is, however, clearly the duty and the function of the Council to determine upon objects for such common action and to find appropriate expression of the consciousness and the conscience of the churches upon them.

Functions of the Council.—While the duties of the Council are thus, with these safeguards and limitations, to represent the churches upon important matters of common concern, and, in the sentences above indicated, to exercise a genuine leadership which recognizes the whole body of its constituency, the

Council may not consider itself primarily as an independent entity, but rather as a common ground upon which the constituent bodies through their official delegates come together for co-operation.

Under this conception the Federal Council does not create new agencies to do the work of the churches, nor does it do the work of the denominations or the churches for them. Its policy is that of using the existing agencies, and this policy should be followed out with relation to the interdenominational movements which are recognized by the churches. In the main, however, these existing agencies are the constituent bodies themselves and their official boards and departments.

It is, therefore, the function of the Council, not so much to do things as to get the denominational bodies and the interdenominational movements to do the work of the churches in co-operation. Here its function is not that of overseer and director, but that of an agency for the correlation and the co-ordination of existing forces and organizations, and, so far as it may be permitted, it is to recommend, give guidance, and point out the way.

Relation to local federative agencies.—With relation to State and Local Federations the Plan of Federation distinctly, it is held by many, intended that the Federal Council should be the initiator, creator, inspirer, and, so far as possible, the directing agency of such federations.

There is, however, no organic relation between the Federal Council and State and Local Federations, and it can assume no responsibility for the constituency of such federations or the form which they may take, or indeed any responsibility, except so far as they may carry out the principles and the policy of the Council.

Commissions.—These same principles of policy apply to the various commissions appointed by the Council. They act always as agents of the Council and distinctly represent themselves as such. They also hold themselves as subject to the Executive Committee of the Council in accordance with the by-laws of the Council.

Like the Council itself, these Commissions, in relation to the denominational agencies, regard themselves as the sum of all their parts.

The Council thus seeks to find the will of the constituent bodies and their departments and to interpret and express it in common terms. The Council then aims to secure the doing of the will and conscience of the constituent bodies by common and united action.

The co-operation implied in the fellowship of the Federal Council does not require any one of the constituent bodies to participate in such co-operative movements as may not be approved by it, or for which its methods of organization and work may not be adapted.

The Federal Council meets quadrennially and consists of about four hundred qualified delegates officially elected by the various denominational assemblies or other constituted authorities. Its

Executive Committee consists of about ninety of these delegates and acts for the Council during the quadrennium between its sessions, holding regular meetings. The Executive Committee has an Administrative Committee, holding regular monthly meetings, which acts for the Executive Committee between its sessions. The national office and its executives, under the Administrative Committee, carry on the continuous work of the Council. The Council appropriately maintains an office in Washington, D.C., and has become an incorporated body under the laws of the District of Columbia.

The period from 1905 to the final organization of the Council in 1908 was occupied in consultation with the thirty denominations invited to constitute the Council and in securing the official election or appointment of representative members. The quadrennium from 1908 to 1912 was a period largely of experimentation. The Executive Committee necessarily moved slowly and cautiously in the effort to make the adjustment between federation and denominational autonomy.

Much effort was given to the development of state and local federations, the nation being divided into districts in charge of district secretaries. This method, however, did not avail. The cities and towns were not prepared for federation. Many, therefore, of the federations organized were short-lived. It became apparent that the Council would need first to develop the spirit of federation before it could proceed to successful local organization.

At the quadrennial meeting in December, 1912, in Chicago, the work began anew. At that time the central organization consisted of two modest offices with one secretary, a stenographer, and one or two clerical assistants.

The Federal Council is developing its functions somewhat as follows: first of all, it is a clearing-house for denominational and interdenominational activities; secondly, it speaks and acts in a representative capacity for the evangelical churches of America which constitute the Council; thirdly, it acts for the churches in several departments of work through commissions and committees made up largely from the various boards and departments of its constituent bodies; and fourthly, it develops local federations in cities and towns.

I. THE FEDERAL COUNCIL AS A CLEARING-HOUSE

During the past four years the central organization has developed until now it occupies over thirty office rooms and maintains a printing and publication department of considerable magnitude, with fairly adequate machinery for reaching all the churches upon very short notice. Nine executive and field secretaries give their entire time to this united work of the churches, all of them being regarded as experts in their particular spheres. Several of the denominational secretaries give part time to the service of the Council. The central office maintains a staff of about forty assistants. The work of the secretaries consists of the visitation of denominational gatherings and local federations and the co-ordination of the work of the various commissions for the purpose of inspiring and stimulating co-operation among the churches. Contact is maintained with all the churches, and the central office is rapidly becoming a general bureau of information, issuing yearbooks and similar publications.

The Council has the beginnings of a religious publicity bureau. Important causes are taken up and furthered, common movements are generated, and the central administration is becoming a general power-house for the churches.

The office at Washington gives constant consideration to the interests of the churches which naturally center at the national capital, such as the appointment of chaplains, the care of the army and navy, the religious census, and similar concerns.

It should be noted that, while the pastors are receiving constant communications from the office of the Federal Council, they are appeals very diversified in nature and simply represent the multitude of legitimate interests which center in the Council. They represent economy in ecclesiastical administration because all these lines of work are carried on at one administrative expense instead of separately at greatly increased cost.

2. THE REPRESENTATIVE CAPACITY OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

The functions of the Federal Council in its representative capacity have not been determined. Its administration attempts to represent the churches upon matters where substantial una-

nimity is obvious. It exercises this representative capacity by utterances in behalf of the churches; by messages upon matters of common concern; by the appointment of appropriate national days of prayer, and by the issuing of common subjects for the week of prayer, both at the beginning of the year and at Easter time. It undertakes certain activities in the name of the churches, such as the religious work in connection with the Panama Pacific Exposition, the celebration of the American Peace Centenary, the celebration of the Protestant Reformation, the co-operative movement for war relief, and such work as is done in co-operation with the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the churches.

The recent special meeting of the Council at Washington was a significant illustration of the exercise of its representative capacity. This meeting issued a message for the hour, prepared a common program for works of mercy, for the moral and religious welfare of the army and navy, for the development of the work of the chaplains, and for the conservation of the social, moral, and spiritual forces of the nation.

This function of the Council is illustrated by its comprehensive campaign for the conservation of human life, which includes both the spiritual and the social factors necessary to such a movement. From time to time new movements are projected such as the occasion may demand.

3. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKINGS

The various fields of service are covered by commissions. These are constituted, first, by the appointment of members representing the constituent denominations, to which are added men and women who are regarded as experts in their respective fields.

The Commission on Evangelism endeavors to stimulate the evangelistic spirit, to secure the organization of denominational commissions on evangelism, to co-ordinate the work of these commissions, and thus to bring about a nation-wide spirit and movement of evangelism.

The Commission on the Church and Social Service has formulated a statement of social objectives which has become almost a

classic in the world of social endeavor. Denominational commissions have been organized and have been brought into co-operative action. This commission has formed a connecting link between the churches and the various social movements, thus increasing the social spirit among the churches and infusing the social movements with the Christian spirit.

The Commission on Temperance has brought its work into co-operation with the historic National Temperance Society, and the two bodies now think and act as one. The immediate program now in operation includes the agitation for prohibition during the war, a movement for the abolition of the use of liquor at college and university commencements, a workingman's fellowship among labor organizations, an advertising campaign in the labor papers, a movement among society women for the discontinuance of the use of liquor at social functions, and other similar movements. The commission published five monthly temperance periodicals, including one for workingmen and two for young people.

The Commission on International Justice and Good Will was instrumental in securing the endowment by Mr. Carnegie of the Church Peace Union and the organization of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. It has published handbooks, lesson courses, and similar material for educating and organizing the sentiment of the churches.

The Commission on Christian Education faces a complex task because of the multitude of interdenominational bodies working in this department, and it is endeavoring at the present moment to bring them into effective co-operation. Among the special matters with which the commission is now dealing is that of the relation between religious instruction and the public-school system. The commission has published two series of lessons on international peace with a handbook for the use of pastors and teachers.

In the realm of home missions the Home Missions Council is a body co-operating with the Federal Council. The Home Missions Council is made up of representatives of the denominational home mission boards in the interests of effective distribution and the adequate care of home mission interests.

The Commission on the Church and Country Life has up to the present time occupied itself mainly with surveys of rural church conditions, the last one, in the state of Ohio, bringing to light facts which are so startling that some improvement will surely issue as the result of the survey.

The Committee on Foreign Missions co-operates with the Conference of Foreign Mission Boards of North America. Its recent report to the quadrennial meeting of 1916 records a remarkable progress during the last decade in foreign fields which the churches at home might well take as an example. If we were to go out into this realm, however, with the story of the Edinburgh Conference and the Panama Congress, we should have a book instead of an article.

The Federal Council, from time to time, according to the call of the occasion, appoints special commissions, such as the Commission on Relations with Japan, whose work has been so noteworthy. This commission has been enlarged to a Commission on Relations with the Orient.

Other committees operating with perhaps less effectiveness up to the present time are those on Ministerial Relief and Sustentation, on Family Life and Religious Rest Day, and a recent committee appointed by the Executive Committee to care especially for the interests of the negro churches and people.

From time to time organizations are perfected to meet the needs of the hour, such as the Committee on the Celebration of the Protestant Reformation, the committees on various interests related to the war, the Committee on Christian Work in the Canal Zone, various committees for the relief of Protestant churches and missions in Europe, and the Committee on War Relief and the Work of the Red Cross.

The most signal example of the procedure of the Council in carrying out that principle in its constitution stating that its purpose is "to secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life," is the recent development of a War Work Commission to meet the unusual tasks brought about by our entrance

into the war, including the importance of general leadership on the part of the church; the work of war relief in connection with the Red Cross and other bodies; the selection and training of chaplains; the distribution of religious literature; the services of outside preachers in connection with the camps; the moral and religious conditions in communities surrounding the camps; the provision of voluntary chaplains for the reserve officers' training camps, and other religious work in connection with such camps; temperance movements; the relations between the home churches and the men at the front; the care of the families of the enlisted men upon the part of the churches; the maintenance of the work of charitable organizations; the preservation of industrial standards; the preparation of war manuals and similar literature for pastors and church workers; the consideration of interned aliens; preparation for the work of reconstruction after the war; the appointment of missionaries to go abroad with the troops; and other similar work.

It is probably obvious that these are tasks which can better be performed by thirty Christian bodies acting together than by thirty Christian bodies acting apart.

4. LOCAL FEDERATION

The work of the present Commission on Interchurch Federations grew largely out of the Men and Religion Movement and has as its chairman and executive secretary the men who occupied the same positions in that movement.

The so-called district system did not meet with adequate success because the various communities differ widely in their readiness for federation. The commission is now approaching communities where the circumstances give promise of effective procedure. The ground is prepared in advance by adequate investigation and consultation. Federations in cities and towns of substantial size are not advised, unless the churches are ready to take the matter seriously, to establish an office for the federation, to raise a budget, and to employ a secretary. At the present time there are about twenty-five or thirty really effective federations. In the smaller towns, where it is not possible to have administrative machinery, the commission recommends that the pastors and

laymen shall give the federation the earnest and serious attention and service which it demands. Local correspondents are now being secured for every city and town in the country. In October a representative congress will be held at Pittsburgh for which long and careful preparation has been made in the effort at least to approach the standardization of the work and functions of local federations.

In justice to the principle of ecclesiastical economy, it should be noted that all these operations are carried on under one administration and at an expense which would be multiplied many times were this work being done by thirty bodies instead of by one.

At the special meeting of the Council at Washington, President Henry Churchill King expressed the belief that the Council had been born for just such a national hour as this. Previous to this time the chaplains in the army and navy have been appointed rather indiscriminately, often through political channels, and without very much concern on the part of the churches. Now the Secretaries of War and the Navy have at their hand in Washington a body representing all the churches with which they can deal. When the missionaries in Japan have occasion to plead their cause before the American churches, they have a body to whom they can come. When the Red Cross needs the service of Christian people, the organization turns instinctively to the Federal Council. The Protestant churches of war-stricken Europe find an open door to American Christianity. The persecuted Jews can here seek consideration for their wrongs. The religious census department finds it necessary to keep in constant communication with the Washington office of the Council. The social workers, the officers of the organizations for war relief, and similar toilers in the world's work are our daily visitors.

Progress, to be sure, is not necessarily indicated by statistics, and yet, perhaps, they indicate something. Four years ago the quadrennial reports constituted one moderate volume; the reports of the quadrennium just closed constitute six rather voluminous books.

Especially since the beginning of the war the relationships between the churches of America and Europe have deepened, and it is interesting to note that invitations have come to the Federal

Council from Holland and France to send messengers and counselors to help the Protestant churches of these countries toward more intimate co-operative organization and action.

Probably most of the leaders of the Christian denominations would agree with the affirmation of the Committee of Fifteen which was appointed to present a survey of the work of the Council, that, whatever decrease there may be of the sectarian spirit, the work of the Federal Council has not impaired the strength of the denominations and has not interfered with their legitimate autonomy. The federative movement probably has not stimulated denominationalism as such, but it has surely brought strength to denominational activities and has enlarged their boundaries.